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THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 3, 1849.

For the National Era.
SKETCHES
OF
MODERN REFORMS AND REFORMERS,
IN
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.
NEW SERIES.

Novels—Godein—Holcroft—The Drama—Bage—Scott—Miss Edgeworth—Mrs. O'Bye—Miss Melford—Miss Hall—Miss Martineau—Banion—Lever—Lever—Bulwer—Bulwer—Bulwer—Lever—Smith—Brougham—Macintosh—Macaulay—Lamb—Hazlitt—Carlyle—Talfourd—Pemberton—Holland House.

Some of the Novels of this period have contributed not a little to the cause of political reform.

William Godwin, one of the most remarkable men of his time, is known not only as the writer of that extraordinary tale, "Caleb Williams," but of the no less celebrated "Inquiry Concerning Political Justice," a production whose style is as vigorous as its doctrines are radical, displaying rare originality and boldness of conception, and breaching the loftiest aspirations for the well-being of man. Caleb Williams," which appeared soon after the "Inquiry," was intended to give wider currency to the author's views of social and political reform, by cloathing them in the attractive colors of romance. Had Godwin been an ambitious politician, he might have placed himself at the head of a school of reformers. He chose to be a philosophical recluse; and in the storm of the French revolution, he sent out from his retreat breathing thoughts and burning words, that gave increased life and vigor to the hewing mass of mind around him. The friend and counsellor of Tooke and Holcroft, he was obnoxious to the Government, but his retired habits saved him from the persecutions that periled the lives of his more active associates. His numerous writings, like those of Jeremy Bentham, whom he in many respects strongly resembled, while in others no two men could be more dissimilar, have left abiding impressions on many of the noblest minds of England.

Holcroft imbibed liberal principles during the time of the French convulsions. He was the writer of several successful plays, among which was the highly popular "Road to Ruin." He published various novels, which, on account of their political sentiments, attracted much notice. As mere romances they belong not to the first rank, the plots and characters being mere framework to hold aristocratic doctrine up to ridicule, and democratic principles to admiration. The dialogue is often lively and piquant, and many of the portraits are skilfully drawn. And in this connection it may be said that the dramatists of this period pourred some of their rills of philosophy, wit, and satire, into the popular channels. Even Rolla's fustian address to the Peruvians, which sounds like Sheridan's speeches against Pitt and Napoleon, always stimulated the galleries to a higher pitch of hilarity to tyranny. Comedians made upstair noblemen and pedantic doctors of law shake their faces, while the pit shook its sides with laughter. William Tell launched his arrow not in vain at Geeler, for George IV came here being shot in the royal box on an occasion when it was played, and Talfourd and Bulwer, in Ion and the Lady of Lyons, having disguised democracy in classic robes, introduced it to the admiration and applause of the dress circle. To return to novelists. Coeval with Holcroft, Robert Bage, a Tamworth Quaker, not having the fear of George Fox nor the Attorney General before his eyes, published some good political novels. He, like the dramatist, had caught some of the fire of liberty at the general conflagration of the old order of things in Europe, and he bore his "testimony" against the bigotry of Guelph and the arrogance of Pitt, in the form of romances, which though they fell below Holcroft's, received the imprudent of Walter Scott, when he included them in his "Novelist's Library."

The works of the Godwin, Holcroft, and Bage school not only introduced a new era in novel writing, by making fiction the medium of communicating radical opinions, but they also in evaporating the rose-water style of romance, which had so diluted the public taste that "novel" and "insipidity" had come to be synonymous terms. By and by, the public appetite was prepared for a more racy and invigorating regimen. Then appeared the gorgeous but manly and natural historical novels of Scott, too prone to stifle a blood-thirsty, and noble liege, but wearing an air of brotherly eye upon humanity in its humblest forms. About the time that Scott was beginning his Waverley, came the pugnacious and beautiful stories of Miss Edgeworth and Mrs. O'Bye, to be followed by those of Miss Melford and Mrs. Hall, who, whether sketching their pictures of life and manners in the cottages of the lonely or the drawing-rooms of the great, place virtue and philanthropy in the foreground of the painting. At a later period, the philosophic and benevolent Miss Martineau, despite the maledictions of the London Quarterly, admirably succeeded in the still doubtful experiment of conveying the principles of political-economical science in the mass through the medium of tales and sketches. The English Miss Sedgwick deserves the thanks of humanity for putting Benthamism into clear purple and fine lines. Ireland has been profiled in delineators of her sufferings and crimes, jocularities and bulls, both in poetry and prose. Bania, the author of the "Home Tales," and other stories, is the greatest of his class. He paints the times of 'Ninety-Eight in colors so vivid that the tragedy leaps from the canvas. In the "Novelist's Library" he depicts the evils and cruelties of the Catholic penal code in figures so graphic and truthful that the veriest bigot can hardly restrain his indignation at the Protestant oppressors. 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THE NATIONAL ERA.

For the National Era.
NUMBER OF SLAVEHOLDERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

No census has ever given us the number of slaveholders. We hear and see and feel so much of their power, that we are apt to confound them with the white population of the South. It is one of our popular delusions, that every Southerner is the owner of slaves; whereas, in fact, the people who are forever threatening to dissolve the Union, unless permitted to govern it, are a very small landed aristocracy.

In "An Address to the Non-Slaveholders of the South," published a few years since, there was a long array of arguments and statistics, to prove that each master could not, on an average, hold less than ten slaves. Of course, on this average, the slave population, divided by ten, would give the number of owners, viz: 248,771. This number, deducted from the white males over 20 years old, in the Slave States and Territories, viz: 1,016,307, would give us 767,596 adult white non-slaveholders.

A fact has recently come to light, that most conclusively proves that this supposed average of ten slaves to the master is very far below the true number. It seems there was a census taken (1845) in Kentucky of slaves, and slaveholders.

Mr. Underwood of that State, in a recent speech

published in the New York Express, gives the number of voters as 130,012 of slaves, 193,470-

and of slaveholders, 8,743!! being an average of more than 22 slaves to each master. Now,

let it be recollected, that the slave necessarily less concentrated upon Kentucky farms, than they are upon the large plantations of the more northern States. It is well known that the great planters hold from 100 to 2,000 slaves. A letter, lately published in the newspapers, from the Parish of Ascension, Louisiana, gives an account of the ravages of the cholera in the neighborhood, says: "Mr. Fish has lost 20 negroes, Kenner 31, Dells 15, Mazar 66, Colonel Bibb has lost 70; Bishop Polk 64." But applying even the Kentucky ratio, which is obviously too small, to the slave slave region, the result is astounding. The whole number of slaves—men, women, and children—were, by the last census, 2,487,711. This number, divided by 22, gives 113,077 as the sum total of the slaveholders in the United States. Beyond all question, this is an exaggerated estimate.

We are now qualified to judge of the accuracy of the reports made by the slaveholders themselves of their number.

Mr. Horace Mann, in a speech, June 30, 1848, in the House of Representatives, observed: "I have seen the number of actual slaveholders variously estimated, but the highest estimate I have ever seen is three hundred thousand." He was interrupted by Mr. Gayle of Alabama—"If the gentleman from Massachusetts has been informed that the number of slaveholders is only 300,000, then I will tell him his information is utterly false!" Mr. Mann—"Will the gentleman tell us how many there are?" Mr. Gayle—"Ten times as many." Ten times 300,000 being 3,000,000, there were, according to the gentleman from Alabama, more slaveholders than slaves! Mr. Meade of Virginia, seeing the awkward position in which Mr. Gayle had placed him, interposed, in order to rescue him: "When fathers or mothers own slaves, they were considered the joint property of the family; and that, including the grown and the young, there were about three millions interested in slave property?" Thus was it attempted to make out a case for the slaves, by appealing to their own interest.

It is this same powerful aristocracy, which the political authority of the States in which they reside; and this they do, not only through their wealth and superior education, but by making the masses believe that, by protecting and perpetuating slavery, they are promoting the common good.

According to Mr. Gayle, there is in the country a majority of 150,867 non-slaveholding voters; yet, at the recent election, most of these were persuaded by "the Lords of the Lash" to go for everlasting slavery.

It is this same powerful aristocracy, which the masters rest wholly upon the ignorance and suberviency of the non-slaveholders. Hence the wrath and trepidation manifested by the masters, whenever an attempt is made to enlighten the masses as to the influence of Slavery on their interests. Some years ago, a number of slaveholders, amounting to 500 copies of an address to the non-slaveholders had been received at the Post Office in that city; but, instead of being delivered to the persons to whom they were addressed, they were returned to the Post Office.

Mr. Barrett has recently been arrested in South Carolina, and is now in prison. His sole offence, and the only one of which he is accused, is that of having deposited in the Post Office sealed wraps, addressed to certain white citizens, containing a printed address to the non-slaveholders of the State, and virtually addressed to the non-slaveholders of South Carolina. This tract points out various provisions in the State Constitution which it contends were contrived to give a political pre-eminence to the owners of slaves. It shows that the few slaveholders who represented them in the system carried, that less than one-third of the free white population elect a majority of the members of both Houses of the Legislature! The tract gives the political quality for a seat in the Legislature of two-thirds of the non-slaveholders. No man can be elected to the lower House, unless he possesses real estate worth \$700, clear of debt, or 500 acres of land and TEN NEGROES! To be sure, the Legislature requires double the amount of real estate. The Legislature, however, is not the only body which the whole judiciary, including Justices of the Peace, and also the Presidential Electors; and to perpetuate this monopoly of slaveholding power, no alteration can be made in the Constitution, without the unanimous consent of two-thirds of the non-slaveholders. No man can be elected to the lower House, unless he possesses real estate worth \$700, clear of debt, or 500 acres of land and TEN NEGROES!

The Legislature, however, addressed to white citizens, Mr. Barrett is treated as a felon and denounced as "an incendiary Abolitionist," and as we learn from a South Carolina journal, is liable to "twelve months' imprisonment and one thousand dollars fine." Nay, we are assured, "there is not even a possibility of his being tried for his offense, the penalty of which is death, without benefit of clergy; and assuredly, if convicted, all the Abolitionists in the United States cannot save him."

We are, in these efforts of the slaveholders to keep us in ignorance, like children in ignorance of the wrongs they suffer, and of the rights to which they are entitled, and to punish whoever would enlighten them, a despotism as jealous and as heartless as any known in the Old World.

Our 100,000,000 of people, with a threatening 20,000,000, of people with rebellion and civil war, if forbidden to establish, over vast regions of the American continent now free, the system of white serfage, with landed aristocracy, with which South Carolina is in contact, and which the iniquitous demands of the White Party so imperiously impose, is a most hideous and threatening prospect.

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